

# How Mitchell's Story Differs

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## Washington

John N. Mitchell's version of events in the Watergate affairs varies drastically and irreconcilably from the testimony of other key witnesses heard by the Senate investigators.

The former attorney general and one-time campaign director for President Nixon, who spent all day before the Senate Watergate committee, remembered most of the framework of the scandal.

But he flatly rejected many crucial details related earlier in the Senate hearings by figures such as Jeb Stuart Magruder, his deputy at the committee to re-elect the president, and John W. Dean III, the former counsel to the president.

## WIRETAPS

He said he had not approved the wiretapping at the offices of the Democratic national committee, and he denied receiving information based on the tapped conversations.

While admitting knowledge of an attempted cover-up, he disputed Magruder's recollection of such substantive matters as the destruction of wiretap memoranda and Dean's statement about the collection of pay-off money for those arrested in the espionage plot.

At one point Mitchell accused Magruder of "a palpable, damnable lie." At another, Senator Herman E. Talmadge, (Dem-Ga.) charged Mitchell with a conflict in sworn testimony.

Talmadge reminded Mitchell that in March of 1972, Mitchell had testified under oath to the Senate Judiciary Committee that he played no re-election campaign role while serving as

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Attorney General. Yesterday, he conceded that he had indeed played a major role while in the top Justice Department job.

## IMPLICATION

The implication that ran through it all was that one former official or another had committed perjury on a massive scale, a suggestion that has perhaps been less vivid before now.

Magruder, who came before the Senate Committee on June 14, said that the wiretapping plans were presented to Mitchell for the second time at a meeting in his justice department office on Feb. 4, 1972.

## 'TARGETS'

"At that meeting," Magruder said, "we did discuss potential targets. We discussed the potential target of the Democratic National Committee, primarily because of information we had relating to Mr. O'Brien."

Lawrence F. O'Brien was then national chairman of the Democratic party, and, according to Magruder, there was a series of reasons behind the decision to listen-in on his telephone conversations.

O'Brien, he said, had been "a very effective spokesman against our position on the IIT case," which involved settlement of a major anti-trust action brought against the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. by the Justice Department.

Mitchell agreed on the time and place of the session, agreed with Magruder's list of the participants, agreed that espionage had been discussed, and agreed that he had rejected the plan at that time.

But he strongly disagreed with Magruder that any targets had been talked over and, as he did from time to time in his testimony yesterday, sought to bolster his statement with corroborating detail.

For one thing, he said, the IIT case did not even become an issue until February 29, when columnist Jack Anderson published a memorandum by a lobbyist for IIT suggesting that the anti-trust settlement had been politically inspired.

The memorandum, attributed to Dita Beard of IIT, prompted renewed Senate hearings on Richard G. Kleindienst's nomination as attorney general in March, but the antitrust settlement had been controversial before that. O'Brien had criticized the settlement during the previous year.

## MEETING

In his appearance last month, Magruder testified repeatedly that Mitchell had finally given his approval to a wiretapping program during a meeting in Key Biscayne, Fla., on March 30, 1972.

"Mr. Mitchell simply signed off on it in the sense of saying, 'Okay, let's give him (conspirator G. Gordon Liddy) a quarter of a million dollars and let's see what he can come up with.'"

Mitchell remembered the meeting in Key Biscayne and he agreed with his one-time deputy that it was simple indeed. His version was as follows:

"Well, it was very simple. This, again (I said:) 'We don't need this, I am tired of hearing about it, out, let's not discuss it any further.'"

## REPORTS

Magruder said he had taken the reports on the wiretapping to Mitchell a week or so after the eavesdropping began and had shown them to the former attorney general during one of the 8:30 meetings "I had each morning with him."

"I showed him the documents . . .," Magruder said. "He, as I recall, reviewed the documents (and) indicated . . . that there was really no substance to these documents and . . . not worth the money that he (Liddy) had been paid for it." Mitchell, calling this "a palpable, damnable lie," testified that in fact he had a meeting at the White House each morning in that time period and that his appointment record would show no meetings alone with Magruder at the time.

Magruder testified that

during a June 19 meeting with Mitchell and others "it was generally concluded" that files of the wiretap reports should be destroyed.

"Not in my recollection was there any discussion of destruction of documents at that meeting," Mitchell swore yesterday.

## money

Dean, who appeared before the committee throughout the week of June 25, said there had been a meeting on June 28 in Mitchell's office, dealing with money for the men arrested at the Watergate eight days earlier.

"... Mitchell asked me to get the approval of Haldeman and Ehrlichman to use Herbert Kalmbach to raise the necessary money," Den testified. He referred to H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, then the president's two ranking advisers, and to Herbert W. Kalmbach, Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer.

"There was no such meeting," Mitchell said. "I made no such request, ever."

Mitchell added that he had been in New York on June 28 and had not returned until about 5:30 p.m.

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